

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3-8, 13 and 14 remain pending in the present application. Claims 2 and 9-12 have been cancelled. Claims 1, 4-8, 13 and 14 have been amended. Basis for the amendments can be found throughout the specification, claims and drawings as originally filed.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 1-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention. Applicants have reviewed and amended the claims to correct the issues identified by the Examiner as well as other issues in an effort to overcome this rejection. Reconsideration of the rejection is respectfully requested.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1, 6-8, 12 and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Inoue Seiji (JP 07-269987). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

The feature of the present invention resides in the fact that the length of the pipe can be easily adjusted to a specific length simultaneously with a diameter expanding process in which an expanded diameter portion is formed at an end portion of the pipe.

On the other hand, Seiji (JP 07-269987) discloses a pipe connecting connector 20 in which seat parts 7, 8, 24 and 25 and inner passages 3 and 4 can be easily formed. As the seat parts and the inner passages are formed by inserting connecting

pipes 22 and 23 into through-holes formed in a connecting block 21 and expanding them with an expanding jig 26 and a jig 28, it is unnecessary to machine the inner walls of through-holes in block 21 with high precision and thus, the machining cost can be reduced.

However, Seiji does not teach the concept of adjusting the pipe length. In Seiji, the length of the pipe 22, 23 between the large diameter seat portion 24, 25 and the expanded diameter seat portion 7, 8 is always the same as the length of the hole of the connecting block 21, that is, there is no possibility that the length of the pipe between the large diameter seat portion and the expanded diameter seat portion is different from the length of the hole of the connecting block. Therefore, Seiji does not address that the length of a pipe, the length of which inevitably fluctuates because a bent portion is formed in the pipe, is adjusted to a specific value. Any excess length of pipe in Seiji is left on either end of Seiji and is not positioned at a position apart from the one end where the pipe chuck is positioned.

Further, Seiji does not disclose the step of positioning one end portion of a pipe on the side opposite to the side on which a diameter expanding portion is formed, at a determined position by, a jig, and the step of fixing the pipe by clamping a portion of the pipe apart from the other end portion of the pipe at a distance defined by a product size, by a pipe chuck.

Finally, Seiji does not disclose the step of adjusting the pipe length by adjusting the size of an annular protruding portion.

Accordingly, we believe that Seiji does not disclose, teach or suggest a method of manufacturing piping having a respective joint portion at both end portions of the pipe

while adjusting the distance between the end portions according to the present invention.

Thus, Applicants believe Claims 1 and 14 patentably distinguish over the art of record. Likewise, Claims 6-8 which ultimately depend from Claim 1 are also believed to patentably distinguish over the art of record. Claim 12 has been cancelled. Reconsideration of the rejection is respectfully requested.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 2-5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Seiji in view of Takikawa, et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,090,611). Claim 9 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Seiji in view of Applicant's Admitted Prior Art [AAPA] (Fig. 19-20 of Applicant's specification). Claims 10 and 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Seiji in view of Caudill (U.S. Pat. No. 4,980,961). Claim 13 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Seiji.

Claims 3-5 and 13 ultimately depend from Claim 1. As stated above, Claim 1 has been amended and is now believed to patentably distinguish over the art of record. Thus, Claims 3-5 and 13 are also believed to patentably distinguish over the art of record. Claims 2 and 9-11 have been cancelled.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request

that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (248) 641-1600.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: September 17, 2004

By: 

Michael J. Schmidt, 34,007

HARNESS, DICKEY & PIERCE, P.L.C.
P.O. Box 828
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan 48303
(248) 641-1600

MJS/pmg